LITERATURE

This column will give information about new literature, publications, books, etc. Tips concerning new literature are welcome, and should be sent to Ed Prüst, Voorstraat 61, 3512 AK Utrecht, The Netherlands.

Bookreview by K.R.G. Welch

Checklist and Keys to the Terrestrial Proteroglyphs of the World (Serpentes: *Elapidae - Hydrophiidae*). P. Golay, 1985. Elapsoidae Fondation Culturelle, Genève. 91 pages.

A small, in size and page number, book that immediately impresses the reader. The book includes a key to the genera of terrestrial proteroglyphs which is then followed by a list of the genera with their recognised species. A key is included under each generic name for the species of that genus, and any species that has recognised subspecies includes a further key to those subspecies. For those working in the field or with museum collections this book is a must. Still I must note a few criticisms:

1. *For each species the original name, author, year and type locality are given. More accuracy would have been achieved if page number had been included.*
2. *There is a short preface to the book. I would have thought it essential to include a note on the family and generic classification used in the book.*
3. *Wells and Wellington (1983. A synopsis of the Class Reptilia in Australia. Australian Journal of Herpetology 1: 73-129) which includes many comments on classification of Australian proteroglyphs has been ignored.*

Bookreview by K.R.G. Welch

The Venomous Snakes of the Near and Middle East.
U. Jogger, 1984. Wiesbaden, 115 pages.

Every herpetologist must be pleased that at last, a book for identifying the venomous snakes of the area Egypt north to Turkey and east from Egypt through the Arabian Peninsula to Pakistan, has been published.

After a short introduction there is a key to the snakes included in the book. This is followed by individual notes on each species: taxonomy, diagnostic charcters, habitat, distribution. At the end of the book there are four, all individually important, Appendices: diet in nature/ preferred food; reproduction data; venoms; antivenoms available, and from where. The book finishes with distribution maps.

For those interested in the venomous snakes in the Near and Middle East this is the most essential and probably most important book for their library. There is however, two criticisms I have:

1. *The last few pages of the main text are a 'Taxonomical summary'. I feel it is a shame that some of the problems that remain were not solved prior to publication as this would only have increased the importance of the book as a whole.*
2. *The english in places is poor, though this does not distract the reader from the whole.*

Zuchterfolg bei der selten gehaltenen Transpecos-Natter, *Elaphe subocularis*; R. Niederhauser. Herpetofauna (Ludwigsburg), 1984, Vol. 6 (31): 31-34.

In August 1981, the author obtained a pair of captive bred Elaphe subocularis, measuring 60 and 70 cm. As their natural habitat is dry rocky country, these animals are kept in a desert-like terrarium (90x50x60 cm, lxwxh) in which the temperature is 28°C during the day and 20°C at night. A 20 Watt daylight neon light and floorheating are used. The floor is covered with a thin layer of peat which is covered with 5 cm pebble. A small dish of water is present, but this is taken away for four days after feeding because immediate regurgitation occurs if the snakes drink during this period. This species is nocturnal.

In September 1982 the author obtained a pair of wildcaught snakes of this species which were about 130 cm long. In March 1983 they were placed in the terrarium, which now contained only the female from the original pair. Though copulation was not observed, the female grew obviously thicker. On 24 July four eggs were laid in a box filled with humid substrate. The eggs were transferred to a box with damp vermiculite and again placed in the terrarium. The temperature was 22-28°C, the relative humidity of the air always over 90%.

The young hatched after 96 days (10-11 g, 29-31 cm), they shed their skin after 13 days. Following this they ate new born mice.

Sloughing became increasingly difficult after a period of time; this problem ended with the increasing of the relative humidity and some multivitamins.

Erfahrungen bei der Pflege und Nachzucht von zwei afrikanischen *Naja*-Arten: der schwarzweissen Hut-

schlange *Naja melanoleuca* (Hallowel, 1857) und der Kapkobra *Naja nivea* Linnaeus, 1758); L. Trutnau. Herpetofauna (Ludwigsburg), 1984, Vol. 6 (31): 15-16.

In this comprehensive article the pholidosis, colour, distribution, habitats, behaviour, care in captivity, and successful breeding of two African Naja species are described.
Wild living Naja melanoleuca seem to have great adaptability when their original habitat (rainforests) is changed by human interference (plantations, villages). Naja melanoleuca also is an agile climber in spite of its preference to wet habitats.
The author keeps his snakes in terraria of different size (from 170x145x120 to 85x70x65 cm, lxwxh) the floors of which are covered with a mixture of sand and humus. Hiding places and a large watertank are present. The temperature ranges from 22-33°C during the summer to 20-28° C during the winter. Relative humidity is 60-80 %. Both diurnal and nocturnal activity is seen. Sometimes the snakes are basking under a neon light. Dead and live rats and mice are eaten, as are fish and thawed out chicken.
In two successful breedings, mating behaviour was observed but never any copulations. On 20 May, 1975, eleven eggs were laid. These were incubated in a plastic box, with a pierced lid and filled with humus, at temperatures of 25-30 °C. On 6-8 August (after 78-80 days) nine hatched. The young measured 35-40 cm and sloughed after 10 days for the first time. At first they ate small frogs, later taking new born mice.
During February 1983 the author observed combat fights between two males. On 19 October 13 eggs were removed from one of the hiding places. They were incubated in a plastic box filled

with lava earth at temperatures from 23-27°C. When no egg had hatched by January 1984, the temperature was raised to 29-31°C. On 30 and 31 January (after 103-104 days) 12 young hatched from 11 eggs! These sloughed for the first time after 8-10 days and were force fed with new born mice three or four times before they started eating by themselves.

The habitat of Naja nivea is more desert-like. The author keeps four of these animals in terraria of 105x75x60 cm in which the floor is covered with sand and pebble. Hiding places and a tank are present. The temperature varies from 34°C on a summer day to 15°C at night during the winter, though usually 26-30°C during the day and 20-24°C during the night. The preferred food is mice but rats and chickens are also eaten. They are also known to eat snakes of their own and other species. A drawback in feeding live prey is the occurrence of fighting and biting.
During the winter of 1982/83 the temperature in the terraria decreased to 15-22°C for about three months, during which time the snakes remained deep in their hiding-places. In March 1983 the snakes were transferred to a terrarium in which the temperature was a constant 25°C. Copulations were observed on March 8, 16, and 17, on 2 May 6 fertile and 6 infertile eggs were laid, and on 4 May 5 fertile and 5 infertile eggs were laid. They were incubated in a plastic box, filled with damp vermiculite, at 30°C. Four young hatched after 59-60 days, one died while hatching. Another female, only two years old laid 8 eggs on 21 June, they hatched at the end of August. Some of the young ate new born mice immediately after their first sloughing, others had to be force fed for a short period.

Eine neue Art des *Vipera berus*-Komplexes aus der Türkei; Wolfgang Böhme & Uwe Joger. Amphibia-Reptilia, 1983 (4): 265-271.

A new Vipera species is described. The animal originates from northwestern Turkey, north of Adapazari. It is a member of the euro-siberian group within the genus Vipera. It is called Vipera barani. It is characterized by:

1. *Higher ventral count than Vipera ursinii and Vipera kaznakovi;*
2. *Higher subcaudal count than Vipera ursinii, Vipera kaznakovi, and Vipera berus;*
3. *Only one row of subocular scales (in contrast with Vipera aspis);*
4. *Totally melanistic, with white supralabials and a bright yellow underside of the tail.*

The possibility of a hybrid nature of the only preserved specimen (from originally three animals) is discussed and dismissed.